

Catton Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134960
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	319593
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Deane-Hall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	484
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Savory
Headteacher	Mr Tim Lawes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Weston Road Norwich NR3 3TP
Telephone number	01603 426728
Fax number	01603 426728

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Inspection number	319593

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school in Norwich. It opened in September 2007 following the amalgamation of a first school and a middle school. Most of the children are of White British heritage and nearly one-third are from other White backgrounds. A small number speak English as an additional language. The number entitled to free school meals is well above average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) attend the Nursery on a part-time basis and Reception for at least two terms as full-time learners. There is a Children's Centre on site, which is not managed by the governing body. The school has received the 'Active Mark' Award, Investors in People and 'Healthy Schools' accreditation. It also holds the Active Norfolk 'School of the Year' Award. The EYFS section has the Norfolk Quality Assurance Kitemark Award (2007).

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good quality of education. Parents rightly believe this is an improving school, where standards are rising. The amalgamation has been successfully managed by a strong team, led by the headteacher. Throughout a lengthy building programme, the needs of the children have come first.

Children enter the EYFS with skills and knowledge that are low for their age, particularly in their communication skills, social development and mathematical development. Many of the children have a limited vocabulary, which reduces their ability to discuss their ideas and subsequently hinders the development of their reading and writing. Children make good overall progress as they move through the school, because teaching is good and they have a wide range of learning opportunities provided for them. Although standards at the end of Year 2 are below national averages, children continue to make good progress, so that by the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the national average. Standards in reading are rising because the school has rightly placed emphasis on enriching opportunities for children to widen their use of language. However, this has yet to fully impact upon their ability to use this knowledge in their writing. As a result, standards in English lag behind both mathematics and science. Achievement is good overall, although the progress that children make as they move through the school is not consistent and some, including the higher attainers, do not achieve all they can. Similarly, the poorer attendance of some children slows the rate at which they can make progress.

The personal development of the children is good. Many say they enjoy their lessons and behaviour is good. Children have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are clear about how to keep themselves and others safe. Many are keen to take on responsibilities in the school and wider community.

Teaching is consistently good. There is some outstanding teaching when lessons are closely based upon previous learning and where high expectations of what children can do are shared with the class. The school provides a good range of activities to help children to learn. These include good opportunities for physical education and creative activity, such as in dance. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to aid learning and speed progress. The school has good procedures to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Care, guidance and support are outstanding so that children feel safe and secure in school. Staff check children's progress extremely carefully and use this information well to provide challenging activities to enrich learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear priority to raise standards further. He is extremely well supported by other staff within a shared leadership structure. Governors undertake their role satisfactorily. However, at this early stage of the school's life, several of the recent changes in their working arrangements are still bedding in. The links with parents and the community are strong. The school provides many opportunities for organisations to work closely with the school and for parents, agencies and the school to enrich children's learning. The capacity to make further improvement is good with the amalgamation successfully completed, very accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness, and improvements in children's progress leading to improving standards. The school is well placed to face the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching and excellent promotion of the children's welfare ensure that the children make good progress in the EYFS from a low base. Staff in the EYFS know the children well. They ensure that their personal, social and emotional needs are given high priority, rightly believing that this provides the bedrock for children's future learning and development. Even so, children have so much catching up to do that most do not reach the expected levels by the time they leave Reception. Children settle quickly into Nursery routines and gain confidence and independence. This continues through Reception where children are sensitively and effectively prepared for their move into Year 1. Parents appreciate the strong links made with the school. Staff rightly focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. They provide many opportunities to do this through role-play, discussion with individuals and small groups and by providing good examples themselves. These strategies are having a positive impact on raising standards. Children enjoy their learning because there is a very good mix of interesting activities both inside the classroom and outdoors. There is a good balance between child-suggested and adult-led activities, although this occasionally means that the more able do not achieve as much as they could because learning opportunities are not always sufficiently challenging. Opportunities for children's creative development are particularly good within the six areas of learning. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. This has ensured that teaching is consistently good and that there is a common sense of purpose amongst staff. This focuses on helping children to make good progress within a very safe and supportive setting. Systems to check children's progress are very secure and used well to support their next steps in learning. For example, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and receive effective support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing, particularly for the more able, by ensuring that all lessons provide sufficiently challenging learning opportunities.
- Improve children's attendance so that they benefit from the provision the school has to offer and achieve as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children enter Year 1 their skills, knowledge and understanding are below what is expected for their age. Many still have limited literacy skills. This limits both their ability to communicate with others and improve their reading and writing skills. For many, this limited vocabulary has the effect of slowing their learning in other subjects. The school has moved swiftly to support children's literacy, recognising that this is the way to improve standards in writing. It has put in place a framework to support the necessary improvement. For example, all children answer questions in lessons using full sentences. This helps them to choose their words carefully, practise new words and develop the structures, which can be used to support their writing. Lessons are carefully structured. Teaching clearly builds on children's prior learning and identifies the learning for the lesson. As a result, children know what they are to learn, what they need to do and how they will know when they have succeeded. This approach is starting to meet the wide range of needs effectively. Standards are improving, particularly in mathematics and science where they are broadly average by the time children leave the school. However, too

few children reach the higher levels. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the very small number whose mother tongue is not English also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children enjoy school and make good progress in their personal development. Behaviour is good and children feel safe in school. They develop positive values, which lead to their good social and moral development. Spiritual and cultural awareness are less strong, but children appreciate the excitement of special activities such as Christmas productions or the 'capoeira' groups. Those from minority ethnic groups say they feel well respected. Children are developing their understanding of their local and wider cultural heritage suitably and many are beginning to appreciate the cultural heritage of their city. Their understanding of healthy life choices is outstanding. They know what comprises a healthy diet and participate enthusiastically in exercise, many contributing to the significant sporting successes of the school. Children who have emotional problems thrive in the school's trusting environment. Many children make a positive contribution around the school by taking on responsibility in class and through their involvement in charitable appeals. However, the school council feels that the 'play-helpers' system should be re-introduced to give greater support to younger children. Children are prepared satisfactorily for their future learning. Attendance is slightly below average, but improving and this remains a focus for the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and is characterised by detailed planning, which takes into account the different abilities of children in each class, and interesting activities that fully involve children. Consequently children enjoy their work, try hard and behave well. Teachers use interactive white boards confidently, involving children in their use, which makes learning more interesting. Teachers always tell children what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson and children say they find this helpful. However, these 'learning intentions' are not always in 'child friendly' language and are sometimes too general to provide sufficient challenge for the more able children. Spending time writing out learning intentions sometimes limits achievement in the lesson. Teachers often create a supportive atmosphere in lessons, which means children are willing to 'have a go' and are quick to ask for help if they do not understand. Children with additional learning needs are well supported by teaching assistants, so they make good progress. Teachers generally mark work conscientiously, praising children for what they have done well and giving them confidence. However, opportunities to tell them how to improve their work further are sometimes missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is very well matched to children's needs. The clear focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy underpins all planning and contributes strongly to the children's good progress. The growing emphasis on linking different subjects into themes, especially, for older children, helps them to enjoy and use their learning across different subjects. The extra-curricular provision of the school is outstanding. The wide range of sports present opportunities for

children to extend their interests in physical exercise. A good range of trips and visits helps to make learning more interesting and helps children to get on with each other in different surroundings. Planning to 'stretch' the more able children and those with particular gifts or talents is inconsistent. The modern languages curriculum and the writing framework have been successfully introduced. The carefully structured approach to writing is beginning to show signs of having a positive impact on children's literacy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff show an exceptionally high level of care and support for the children. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are very secure and understood by all adults. Working closely with families is a major strength and is beginning to improve attendance and children's enjoyment of school. In particular, the school has a very high success rate of integrating children who might otherwise find school life difficult to cope with. Provision to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Children's needs are identified early and a highly dedicated team, including a full range of external staff, ensure that high quality group and individual support is put in place. Regular reviews resulting from careful analysis of progress involving all parties, helps these children to integrate into school well. Children are well informed about their progress. Systems for checking how well children are doing are robust and targets are closely linked to their next steps in learning. As a result, most have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The chair of governors and the headteacher have successfully managed the amalgamation of the two schools. The leadership of the school has established an excellent caring ethos in which all children are valued as individuals. The extremely rigorous and accurate self-evaluation process has helped ensure that there is a shared vision for the future of the school and an excellent team spirit. Leaders at all levels are accountable for their work and provide a very clear direction for future improvements. The 'green shoots' of this work are showing in improved progress and rising standards, all within a relatively short space of time. This shared leadership works extremely well and allows staff to support one another while focusing on raising levels of attainment. The school rightly sees itself as a centre for the surrounding community and developing the role that children play in community life is reflected well in curriculum planning. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors are diligently developing systems and procedures. They are rightly re-structuring their committees to ensure that these reflect the context of the school and allow their work to have maximum effect.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Catton Grove Primary School, Norwich, NR3 3TP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we think about your school.

We think you go to a good school where your teachers look after you exceptionally well. Your behaviour is good and you say that you get on well with each other. Older children help around the school, and you learn a lot in lessons. You particularly enjoy lessons when you have plenty of different activities. Because the teaching is good and you have some interesting activities in class and after school, many of you are learning more quickly than you used to, particularly in mathematics and science. You told us that sometimes teachers tell you exactly what you need to do to improve your work, but that sometimes it is not made clear enough. The teachers have good plans to make the school even better. Mr Lawes, the governors and the rest of the staff work very well to make sure that your school helps you to learn. They know what works well and what needs to be improved.

In order to make your good school even better we have asked Mr Lawes and the teachers to help you to improve your writing and make sure that everyone, particularly those of you who find your work more easy, have work which is hard enough to help you learn more quickly. We have also asked them to work even more closely with you and your parents to find ways to make sure that the few of you who do not come to school as often as you should, do come more often so that you can make much better progress.

You can play your part in improving the school further by continuing to behave well and working hard at your writing.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Deane-Hall

Lead inspector